

# THE SHRINE *of* WISDOM

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## KULHWCH AND OLWEN OR THE TWRCH TRWYTH

Of all the stories collected together under the general title of *The Mabinogion* Kulhwch and Olwen is the richest and most complex. In this respect it would be difficult to find its equal among all the known myths, and it bears witness to the depth of thought of the ancient British myth-makers. Its full significance has been lost, for it is evident that the story as now known is incomplete; but even in its present form it indicates the original wealth of British mythology by the great number of heroes and Gods to which it refers by name, a large proportion of whom are now untraceable elsewhere, although they must all have had a real significance. No other reason can be assigned to the introduction into the story of a veritable catalogue of names which appear to have no direct bearing upon the myth itself.

Not the least of its value is that it deals with King Arthur in the original pure British form, before the stories associated with him had been distorted at the hands of the French minstrels and re-imported in the form of Mallory's *Morte d'Arthur*.

Because of the complexity of the myth it is impossible in this article to deal with more than its principal features, and the summary of the story given cannot convey an adequate idea of the profusion of subtle implications contained in the narrative nor of the grandeur of the epic hunt of the boar Twrch Trwyth.\*

\* *The Mabinogion* was translated by Lady Guest in 1849, and there is also a recent translation by T. P. Ellis and John Lloyd.

## THE MYTHOS

Kilydd, the son of Celyddon Wledig, married Goleuddydd, the daughter of Anlawdd Wledig, who bore him a son, whom they named Kulhwch. During her pregnancy Goleuddydd wandered insane about the countryside, but when her delivery was at hand her reason returned and, meeting a swineherd on a mountain, her fear of pigs hastened the birth of the child.

The boy, who was cousin to Arthur (whose mother was Eigr, daughter of Anlawdd), was put out to nurse, and Goleuddydd died, after having obtained a promise from her husband that he would not re-marry until a brier with two blossoms grew upon her grave, and that he would tend her grave every year so that nothing should grow upon it. But at the end of the seventh year the grave was neglected and the brier appeared, whereupon Kilydd's counsellors advised him to marry the wife of King Doged. The king was accordingly slain and his wife and daughter were forcibly carried off.

Eventually the new queen learned from an old witch not only that there was a prediction that she would bear a son by her second husband, but that the latter already had a son. She entreated Kilydd that Kulhwch should be brought back to the court and offered him her own daughter in marriage. The youth, however, refused this offer, and the queen then foretold that he would marry none but Olwen, the daughter of Yspaddaden Penkawr, the chief of the Giants. It needed but the sound of Olwen's name to kindle Kulhwch's love, and, to assist him to gain his desire, his father Kilydd sent him to his cousin King Arthur, that the latter might cut his hair, a custom which would place Arthur in the position of godfather.

So, richly caparisoned, Kulhwch rode to Arthur's court and on January the first was received by the chief porter, Glewlwyd Gavaelvawr, who only performed the duty on that one day of the year. During the remainder of the year the duty was divided between Huandaw, Gogigwc, Llaeskenym and Penpnyngon, who went on his head to save his feet, neither towards the sky nor upon the earth, but like a rolling stone upon the floor of the court.

Received with great honour by Arthur, Kulhwch declined his invitation to remain as an honoured guest, and claimed from him and a number of mythological characters, whom he named



individually, the boon that Olwen should be obtained for him. After searching the land for a whole year, however, Arthur's messengers could gain no news of this unknown maiden. He therefore appointed six knights to aid Kulhwch to find and win her.

These were Cai, who could exist nine days and nights under water without drawing breath, and nine days and nights without sleep, whose sword caused unhealable wounds, who could make himself as tall as the highest tree, and was so hot that not only could no rain wet him but he could warm his companions in the coldest weather; Bedwyr, the swiftest runner in the land, who, although one-handed, was more deadly in battle than nine opposing lances; Cynddelig, who could guide through unknown country; Gwrhŷr Gwalstawd Ieithoedd, who knew all tongues; Gwalchmai son of Gwyar, Arthur's nephew, who never failed in his tasks; and Menw son of Teirgwaedd, who could make himself and his six companions invisible to others.

They travelled across a great plain and saw the fairest castle in the world, which never seemed to become any nearer. Upon reaching it, they encountered a numberless flock of sheep guarded by the shepherd Custennin, who was clad in skins, and a huge mastiff, whose breath burned to the ground all the dead trees of the plain.

Menw, the enchanter, cast a spell over the dog and they learned that the castle was owned by Custennin's brother, Yspaddaden Penkawr, who had despoiled the former's wife.

Custennin upon hearing that they sought Olwen warned them to go back, for none had ever returned from the quest alive. But Kulhwch gave him a gold ring which he carried to his wife, who heard the news with mixed feelings, for Kulhwch was her sister's son, and while she was glad to see him she feared for his life. She ran joyfully to embrace them, but squeezed to pulp a log of wood which Cai thrust into her arms, thus showing what a narrow escape they had had.

In her house she opened a stone chest and showed her youngest son, a curly yellow-haired boy, whom she kept concealed because all her other twenty-three sons had been slain by Yspaddaden Penkawr. Cai offered to take the boy under his protection, and so he was added to the company of the seven heroes.



Through her mediation Olwen came to the house and received Kulhwch's declaration of love, but since it was fated that her marriage would end her father's life, she replied that her lover must seek the Giant's consent and faithfully carry out all the tasks that he would impose.

The knights accordingly repaired to the Giant's castle, and after silently slaying the nine porters and nine watchdogs at the nine gates, confronted him with their request. Yspaddaden called his servants to raise his eyelids with forks so that he might see his future son-in-law; he instructed them to return the next day for his answer, but as they turned to go he flung a poisoned stone spear at them which, however, Bedwyr caught and, hurling it back as an iron spear, pierced the Giant's knee.

At two subsequent interviews Yspaddaden again attempted to kill them in the same manner, and in each case the stone spear was flung back as an iron one, the first by Menw, which pierced the Giant's chest, and the second by Kulhwch, which wounded him in the eye.

On the fourth day Yspaddaden set Kulhwch before him and enumerated the tasks which must be accomplished if Olwen were to be won.

These were thirty-nine in all, but they may be grouped under three main headings. The first included the provision of various requisites for the marriage feast of Kulhwch and Olwen, which entailed the levelling and cultivation of a hill, and the procuring of various foods and utensils. The second the shaving of the Giant with the tusk of the chief boar, Yscithyrwyn; and the third the dressing of his hair with the blood of the witch Orddu and the comb and scissors which were between the ears of the savage boar Twrch Trwyth, the son of Prince Tared. The tasks mainly consisted in securing the aid of those who alone could assist in their accomplishment and in the acquiring of various indispensable implements.

They first set out to obtain the sword of Gwrnach the Giant, the only weapon with which the Twrch Trwyth could be slain. They found his castle guarded by a black man of thrice normal size, who informed them that no visitors ever left the castle alive unless skilled in some craft. As the finest burnisher of swords in the world, Cai was allowed to enter, and after polishing half the Giant's weapon gained permission for the



admission of Bedwyr also, while the son of Custennin secretly led in the others to slay the Giant's servants. For this deed he received the name of Goreu.

When the sword was polished, Cai, under pretence of cleaning the scabbard also, cut off the Giant's head. They then all returned to Arthur's court with the sword, arriving, as before, on the first day of the year.

Their next task was to find Mabon, the son of Modron, who had been taken from his mother when three nights old. He was the only man who could hunt the Twrch Trwyth with the dog Drudwyn, but he could not be found unless they first sought out Eidoel, his cousin. So Arthur himself led them to the castle of Glini, where he persuaded Glini to release his prisoner Eidoel, and sent the latter, with Gwrhy Gwalstawd Ieithoedd, Cai and Bedwyr, to the ousel of Cilgwri for tidings of Mabon.

But although the ousel was very old it had never heard of Mabon, and sent them on to the stag of Rhedynfre, who was still much older. But even his memory was not long enough, so he led them to the owl of Cwm Cawlwyd. But although this bird had lived long enough to see three successive forests grow and decay he could give them no news, and therefore took them to the oldest animal in the world, the eagle of Gwern Abwy. Even he could tell them nothing, except that once, when searching for food as far as Llyn Llyw, he seized a salmon which drew him down into the deep, and he knew no one who could enlighten them unless it were this fish.

So they went to the salmon, who carried Cai and Gwrhyr Gwalstawd on his shoulders to the walls of Caer Loyw, where they heard Mabon lamenting in a dungeon.

They returned with the news, and while Arthur and his warriors attacked the castle, Cai broke through the dungeon walls and brought the prisoner away on his back.

Their next preparation for the hunt was the securing of the two cubs of the bitch Rhymi, which had been changed into the form of a she-wolf. Arthur hunted by sea in his ship Prydwen while others attacked by land, and they caught the cubs in a cave in Aber Cleddyf, when God changed them back into their proper shapes for Arthur.

Arthur's hosts then divided into small parties. As Gwrthyr son of Greidawl was walking over a mountain he rescued some



ants from being burned in a fire. In return, they brought him the nine bushels of flax seed which Yspaddaden had commanded Kulhwch to recover in order to provide a whimple for the bride.

Meanwhile Cai and Bedwyr saw from the summit of Punlummon the smoke of a fire far to the south. Upon nearer approach they found Dillus Farfawg roasting a wild boar. The only leash that could hold the cubs was one that should be made from Dillus's beard plucked from him alive with wooden tweezers. They therefore set to work to make this tool while their victim gorged himself on the meat until he fell asleep. By digging a pit beneath him they were able to knock him senseless, pluck his beard and slay him.

But when they returned with their trophy to Arthur's court, the king so offended Cai by a slighting comment that the knight refused to aid in any subsequent tasks.

Arthur next decided to secure Drudwyn, the cub of Greid son of Eri, which was essential for the hunt; but it so happened that a short time previously Creiddylad daughter of Lludd Llaw Ereint was betrothed to Gwythyr son of Greidawl, and before she became his bride Gwynn son of Nudd carried her away by force. The two rivals fought, but Gwynn triumphed and captured Greid, son of Eri, together with Glinneu, son of Taran, Gwrgwst Ledlwm, and his son Dyfnarth, Penn, son of Nethawg, Nwython and his son Cyledyr Wyllt.

The last named was also needed for the hunt, for none but he could hold the two whelps, but he had been driven mad through eating the heart of his own father at the command of Gwynn.

Arthur therefore went north, summoned Gwynn ap Nudd before him, set free the prisoners, and made peace between the rival lovers on condition that the maiden should for the time remain in her father's house while the two warriors fought for her every first of May until the day of judgment, and whoever then proved victor should have the maiden.

Although the story does not specifically say so, presumably as the result of this action Arthur secured Drudwyn, Greid's cub; and he then acquired Myngdwn, Gweddw's horse, which was needed for Mabon to ride, and the leash of Cwrs Cant Ewin, which alone could hold Drudwyn.



Then Arthur went first to Llydaw, accompanied by Mabon and Gware Gwallt Euryn, to get Glythmyr's two dogs; and afterwards to the west of Ireland for Gwrgi Severi and Odgar son of Aedd, king of Ireland, who alone could pluck the tusk, which was required to shave Yspaddaden, alive out of the head of Yscithyrwynn, the chief boar.

Then, going north and capturing Cyledyr Wyllt, he went in search of Yscithyrwynn itself. Mabon joined in the chase with Glythmyr's two dogs and the cub Drudwyn, and Arthur had his own dog Cavall. Caw of North Britain, mounted on Arthur's own mare, Lamrei, was first in the attack, and splitting the boar's head with an axe took the tusk. Thus the boar was slain by Arthur's own dog, and not by the hounds specified by Yspaddaden.

Then Arthur addressed himself to the supreme task, the hunting of the boar Twrch Trwyth, in order to secure the comb and scissors that were between his ears, which were required to dress Yspaddaden's hair.

He took his host to Gelliwic in Cornwall and despatched Menw to see if these implements were still upon the boar, which already had laid waste a third of Ireland. Menw descended on its lair in the form of a bird and attempted to snatch them, but only succeeded in carrying off one of its bristles, whereat the boar shook poison upon him, so that he was never afterwards without blemish.

Arthur next demanded of the Irish the cauldron of Diwrnach Wyddel, steward of Odgar, son of Aedd, king of Ireland, which was to boil the meat for the wedding feast. This demand was refused, whereupon Bedwyr seized the cauldron and placed it upon the back of Hygwydd, Arthur's servant.

Arthur then summoned the whole of the warriors of the kingdom and invaded Ireland to fight the boar Twrch Trwyth and his seven young pigs. Three separate attacks were made upon successive days, the last continuing for nine days and nights; yet not even one little pig was killed. Arthur's warriors enquired of him the origin of such a fierce animal. He answered that it was once a king, but God had transformed him for his sins.

Arthur then adopted different tactics. He sent Gwrhryr Gwalstawd Ieithoedd in the shape of a bird to reason with the



boar, saying that all he wanted were the scissors and comb. But Grugyn of the silver bristles defiantly replied that only by killing them all could these things be obtained, and he declared their intention of carrying the war into Arthur's country and laying England waste.

So Twrch Trwth landed at Porth Cleis in Dyfed, pursued by Arthur and his host, who ran it to earth at Presseleu, where an unsuccessful fight took place. It made two more stands at Cwm Cerwyn, slaying several of Arthur's warriors and kinsmen, but being itself wounded. But on subsequent days it killed many more of its opponents while it retreated first to Pelumyau, then to Aber Tywi, thence to Glyn Ystu, where the men and dogs lost track of it.

Arthur summoned Gwynn ap Nudd, but he could give no news of Twrch Trwyth, so the hunt went on to Dyffryn Llychwr, where they found the pigs Grugyn Gwallt Ereint and Llwydawg Gofynnyad, who killed all the huntsmen save one. When Arthur came up with reinforcements Twrch Trwyth came to the assistance of the pigs and the fight moved on to Mynydd Amanaw, where three pigs were slain, thence to Dyffryn Amanaw, where two more were killed. Only the pigs Grugyn and Llwydawg Gofynnyad then remained with the boar, who slew more of Arthur's men at Llŵch Ewin and Llŵch Tawy, where Grugyn was separated from the others. Later Llwydawg was hunted down separately and finally slain at Ystrad Yw, after causing great loss to his pursuers.

Twrch Trwyth fled to a place between Tawy and Ewyas, and Arthur summoned all Cornwall and Devon to him at the estuary of the Severn, declaring that the boar should be kept out of Cornwall at all costs. Mabon, Goreu son of Custennin, and Menw forced the boar into the Severn, Osla Kylllellvawr, Manawyddan, Kacmwri (Arthur's servant), and Gwyngelli seized it by the feet and plunged it into the river, while Mabon snatched the razor from it and Cyledyr Wyllt seized the scissors. But before they could grasp the comb the boar fled to Cornwall, where the fight was far more severe than any that had preceded it. But eventually the comb was secured and the Twrch Trwyth driven into the deep sea.

One more task remained—to procure the blood of the witch Orddu, daughter of the witch Orwenn, on the confines of hell.



This was necessary to prepare Yspaddaden's hair for shaving, and Arthur set forth to the north to secure it.

Gwynn and Gwythyr advised sending Cacmwri and Hygwydd, his brother, into the cave, but the witch nearly slew them and drove them out, and two other men fared no better. So Arthur rushed in and killed her with his dagger Carnwenna, the blood being collected by Caw of North Britain.

All the tasks thus successfully completed, Kulhwch, accompanied by Goreu and others repaired to Yspaddaden. Caw shaved the Giant, who then granted the youth his bride, pointing out that his thanks were due to Arthur, who had accomplished the work for him.

Finally Goreu son of Custennin seized the Giant by the hair and slew him, after which Kulhwch and Olwen were wedded.

And thus did Kulhwch obtain Olwen, the daughter of Yspaddaden, the chief Giant.

## EXEGESIS

Since all real myths deal with subjective realities they are capable of various interpretations, therefore the following comments should only be regarded as suggestive of one mode of elucidating this myth, and as indicating certain methods of approach which may be adopted by those who wish to investigate its meaning more fully.

The story seems clearly to be a British version of the great drama of the hero soul in its struggle to achieve actualized perfection, symbolized by the beautiful maiden Olwen. This cannot be attained by avoiding manifestation, but only by valiantly dealing with all the difficulties and limitations of mundane life, which Yspaddaden may here be regarded as representing. The blindness of material existence, as such, is suggested by the closed eyes of the giant, whose eyelids had to be lifted before he could see: but the intelligible principles expressed in the objective realms are symbolised by the essential nature of the works which Yspaddaden required Kulhwch to perform. The successful accomplishment of these tasks signifies the actualization of the soul's potentialities, through which man transcends the limitations of manifestation (death of Yspaddaden), and attains to perfection (Kulhwch's marriage to Olwen).



Just as Custennin and his wife lead the heroes to Yspaddaden, so the aspiring soul is brought face to face with this struggle through experience of the operations of the laws and vital principles of nature, represented by Custennin and his wife respectively.

It is significant that the adventures narrated in the myth follow as the result of Kulhwch's decision not to marry his step-mother's daughter and the immediate love evoked when Olwen's name was mentioned. This implies that natural life, to which the former may correspond, cannot satisfy the aspirations of the hero soul, and that after the choice to reject it has been made, the true ideal to be sought is definitely indicated.

Before the actual beholding of Olwen three other significant incidents take place, all of which represent initial obstacles to be overcome.

The first is Kulhwch's refusal to join in Arthur's feast. The kingship of Arthur suggests man's spiritual nature, and this incident may imply the temptation to live a purely inner life, shunning the trials of mundane existence. The second is Kai's swift action in preventing Custennin's wife crushing them in her embrace, denoting the intuitive avoidance of the fascinations of a purely natural life, which, if embraced too wholeheartedly, quenches aspiration. Yet the essential goodness of natural life itself is indicated by the fact that Custennin's wife is sister to Kulhwch's mother Goleuddydd, who is suggestive of the life of the ideal realms. Natural life is only a hindrance when regarded as an end instead of a means, and it is significant that Yspaddaden had killed all the twenty-four sons of Custennin's wife, save one.

The third incident is the utterance of the warnings of Custennin and his wife: "None who ever went hither on this quest has returned alive"; and "Return again whence you came." This again introduces a natural element, but connected only with the lower aspect of the mind, which regards the attainment of what is beyond its own power to accomplish as impossible of achievement, and any effort to do so as courting disaster.

Arthur may be considered as man's spiritual nature which, when truly sought by the soul, confers the necessary powers for the accomplishment of the tasks. These powers are represented by the companions assigned by Arthur to assist Kulhwch



in obtaining Olwen. It should be noted that the tasks are accomplished by Arthur in conjunction with his followers and that Kulhwch himself is not mentioned as taking part in any of them. From this the inference may be drawn that Kulhwch is identified with Arthur during their execution, even as, in order for the soul's purpose to be fulfilled, it must be identified with spirit. The inability of the soul to accomplish the tasks by itself is denoted by the remarks of Yspaddaden when announcing their nature to Kulhwch, for the Giant repeatedly declares of characters whose co-operation is necessary for the performance of the tasks (or to give requisite things), "He will not do (or give) it of his own free will, and thou wilt not be able to compell him."

The inability of Yspaddaden to injure the companions with the three poisoned stone spears, the returning of them by three of the heroes as iron spears, and the higher part of the Giant's body which was wounded as each was hurled back, suggest the neutralization and conversion of opposing forces, and their utilization with increasing effectiveness as means for the realization of ideal ends.

Although one aspect of Yspaddaden is representative of the limitations of material existence, in another and more mystical sense he symbolizes that aspect of the Divine through which perfection is obtained. The opposition shown by him, the hurling of the spears, and the setting of the tasks, constitute means whereby soul faculties and powers may be unfolded. Without this unfoldment man cannot realize his destined purpose as lord over nature, and until this has been gained perfection is unattainable.

The essentially benefic character of Yspaddaden is implied in the fact of his being the father of Olwen, and that although he apparently tries to prevent Kulhwch from obtaining her, yet the tasks have as their purpose the preparation for their marriage. He refers to the marriage feast in several of the tasks, including the first, and says after all of them have been set: "When you have obtained all these difficult things, my daughter shall be your wife." Moreover one of the tasks is the obtaining of "the cup of Llywr, in which is supreme good."

Of the thirty-nine tasks enumerated, detailed accounts of the performance of only ten are described. Since this exegesis is only



intended to give one suggestive interpretation of the myth the tasks are not dealt with specifically, but some of the chief incidents in four of them, which have a bearing on the general significance of the myth and are illustrative of certain basic principles, are, however, briefly touched upon.

It is of interest that the first task to be performed—that of gaining possession of the sword of Gwrnach the Giant—was the last one to be given: that Kai, symbolical of the intuitional faculty, and the first to be appointed to the work, performed it; that Goreu, the last to join the band of heroes, who completed the work by killing Yspaddaden, should also take part in procuring the sword with which evidently the Giant's head was cut off. The sword was said to be required to kill the Twrch Trwyth, which could never be slain save by it. But the boar was not slain, for the story says that he was driven into the sea and from that time no one ever knew where he went.

The sword suggests intellectual vigour and efficiency, and therefore the accomplishment of the first task provided the means for the completion of all the others.

The second task performed was the finding of the huntsman Mabon, whose chief characteristic was his inaccessibility. Hidden from birth, he was unknown to the ordinary creatures of nature, but the salmon led the seekers to the castle where Mabon was confined, and with its help they were enabled to free him from his prison. The fruitless inquiries made of one creature after another, until the salmon, who is a symbol of wisdom, was asked, suggests penetration through the principles of the cosmos to that Divine Wisdom which lies within and beyond all manifestation.

Arthur's judgment regarding the feud between Gwynn ap Nudd and Gwythyr, while apparently only incidental to the obtaining of certain of the requisites, yet has a definite significance. Gwynn may be considered as representing the underworld and the perpetually renewed fight between Gwynn and Gwythyr for the possession of Greiddylad is suggestive of the opposing spheres of operation in which the soul is involved while in manifestation and of the dual forces associated with natural life.

The most difficult and lengthy task was the obtaining of the comb and scissors from between the ears of Twrch Trwyth. The boar and his offspring may be said to signify the results of



inordination, and the comb and scissors, fitly said to be carried on the boar's head, to symbolize the instruments of reordination.

But before this difficult task could be attempted many lesser ones had to be undertaken in order to acquire the means for its accomplishment. In an analogous manner the aspiring soul must first face and conquer the lesser inordinations so that it may gain sufficient strength for the eradication of its deep-seated inordinations, the difficulty of which is graphically symbolized in the epic fight with the boar and the seven pigs.

After the completion of this major task no obstacles remained to the fulfilment of the purposes towards which the tasks collectively contributed—the shaving and killing of Yspaddaden the chief Giant, and the marriage of Kilhwch and Olwen. It is significant that the Giant offered no resistance to their consummation, even saying of his killing: "It is high time to take my life."

Thus the myth shows that man's ultimate victory over material existence and his lordship over nature necessitate the overcoming of all obstacles to the attainment of perfection, so that his whole nature may be reordinated, and his ideal become actually realized.

## JEWEL

There is no man that is altogether free from temptations. . . . He that only avoideth them outwardly and doth not pluck them by the roots, shall profit little. . . . For first there cometh to the mind a bare thought of evil, then a strong imagination thereof, afterwards delight and evil emotion, and then consent. . . . We ought . . . so much the more fervently to pray unto God . . . for He will surely, according to the words of St. Paul, "make with the temptation a way to escape, that we may be able to bear it. . . . In temptations and afflictions a man is proved, how much he hath profited; and his reward is thereby the greater, and his graces do more eminently shine forth."

—*Thomas à Kempis (The Imitation of Christ).*



## JANUARY

1. New Year's Day—Roman. To Janus (R.), the Opener of Doors.  
Victory of Light over Darkness—Makara-Sankrântî (B.).  
To Jupiter and Juno (R.), Zeus and Hera (G.), Creative Spirit in its  
Double Aspect.
2. Victor Cousin, French Neoplatonist, d. 1867 (b. 28/11/1792 A.D.).  
D. John Norris, Cambridge Platonist, b. 1659 (d. 2/2/1711 A.D.).
3. D. Isaiah, Hebrew Prophet (c. 7-8th cent. B.C.).  
Cicero (R.), b. 106 (d. 7/12/43 B.C.).
4. To One's Own Country and its Ruler.
5. Solon, Athenian King and Lawgiver (c. 600 B.C.).
6. To Amitābha-Buddha—the Boundless Light.  
Epiphany, or Manifestation of Christ.
7. D. Numa Pompilius, 2nd King of Rome, Organizer of Religion and  
Founder of Sisterhood of Vestal Virgins (c. 7th cent. B.C.).
8. Day of the Bodhisattvas and "The Nine Lotus Flowers" (B.).
9. Chanting of Dirge over the Slain Osiris by Isis and Nephthys (E.).
10. Geraint, "The Blue Bard" (c. 9th cent. A.D.).
11. Scaramelli (C.), Mystic, d. 1752 (b. 24/11/1687 A.D.).
12. D. Rāmānuja (H.), Vaishnava Sage and Saint (11th cent. A.D.).
13. To the Arch-Druids.  
George Fox (C.), Founder of the "Quakers," d. 1691 A.D. (b. 1624).  
Hu or Hesus, Priest King of Druids, Successor of Abaris.
14. Kalidasa (H.), Great Poet and Dramatist (s.d. 3rd cent. A.D.).
15. D. Fo-hi, the Great Emperor-Patriarch of Ancient China (s.d. 2850-  
2730 B.C.).
16. To Concordia (R.), Day of Peace.
17. D. Anthony (C.), Patriarch of Monks, d. 356 A.D. (b. 251 A.D.).
18. D. Louis C. de Saint-Martin, "The Unknown Philosopher," b. 1743  
(d. 14/10/1803 A.D.).  
To Surya (H.), God of the Sun.
19. D. Sextus, the Pythagorean.
20. Sun enters Aquarius.  
Aquarian Age began, 1881 A.D.  
D. Sebastian (C.), Martyr, d. 286 A.D.
21. D. Honen Shonin (B.), Founder of Pure Land School (c. 1133-1211 A.D.).
23. Berosus, Babylonian Priest and Historian (3rd cent. B.C.).
24. D. Catwg, "The Wise," Druid Sage (c. 497-577 A.D.).
25. Conversion of Paul of Tarsus.  
D. Henry Suso (C.), Mystic, d. 1365 (b. 21/3/1300 A.D.).
27. D. John Chrysostom of Constantinople (C.), d. 407 (b. 347 A.D.).
28. D. Zoroaster (s.d. 8th cent. B.C.).
29. Peace Festival (R.).  
D. Francis of Sales (C.), b. 1567 (d. 28/12/1622).
30. D. Simplicius, Neoplatonist in Hermetic Succession, d. c. 579  
(b. 531 A.D.).
31. For Departed Ancestors.



## FEBRUARY

1. The Lesser Eleusinian Mysteries, First Day.  
To Brighde, Celtic Goddess of Youth. Oimele, Celtic Spring Festival.  
D. Brigid (C.), Irish Patroness Saint, b. c. 452 (d. c. 525 A.D.).  
D. John Fransham of Norwich, Platonist, d. 1810 (b. 1730 A.D.).
2. The Lesser Eleusinian Mysteries, Second Day.  
Candlemas.  
Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (C.), Composer of Sacred Music, d. 1594  
(b. c. 1525 A.D.).
3. The Lesser Eleusinian Mysteries, Third Day.
4. D. Aeschylus (G.), Initiate and Mystical Poet (c. 525-456 B.C.).
5. Linus, Master of Orpheus (s.d. 13th cent. B.C.).
7. Hesiod, Orphic Theogonist (s.d. 8th cent. B.C.).  
D. Aedesius, Neoplatonist, Successor of Iamblichus (c. 350-400 A.D.).
8. D. Proclus, "The Platonic Successor," b. 410 (d. 17/4/485 A.D.).
9. D. Philo of Judea, Christo-Platonist (c. 30 B.C.-40 A.D.).  
D. Caedmon, Anglo-Saxon Saint (c. 670 A.D.).
10. D. Hwang Ti, the Yellow Emperor (c. 2700 B.C.).
11. D. Aglaophamus, Orphist, in Hermetic Succession (s.d. 8th cent. B.C.).
12. To Artemis (G.), Diana (R.), The Divine Huntress.
13. D. Gorakhnāth (H.), Saint and Mystic (c. 900 A.D.).
14. D. Bro. Lawrence (C.), Mystic, b. 1611 (d. 1691 A.D.).
15. The Februum, or Purification.  
To all the Departed.  
To Pluto and Proserpine (R.).  
Passing of Lord Buddha.
16. Passing of Sri Krishna, 3102 B.C. Kali Yuga began.  
Creuzer, Teutonic Neoplatonist, d. 1858 (b. 10/3/1771 A.D.).
17. D. Giordano Bruno, Mystic and Martyr, d. 1600 (b. 1548 A.D.).
18. Michael Angelo, Sculptor and Painter, d. 1564 (b. 6/3/1475 A.D.).  
D. Ramakrishna, Hindu Saint, b. 1836 (d. 15/8/1886).
19. D. Damascius, Neoplatonist, Successor of Zenodotus (c. 480-550 A.D.).
20. D. Syrianus, "The Most Acute," Neoplatonist, Teacher of Proclus,  
d. 450 (b. 380 A.D.).
21. Sun enters Pisces.
22. The Charista (R.), for reconciliation of differences.  
D. Shōtoku Taishi (B.), Crown Prince of Japan (c. 572-621 A.D.).
23. D. Atisha, or Dīpamkara Buddha, Arhat and Mysteriarch, restored the  
Mysteries to Tibet (c. 980-1050 A.D.).
25. D. Synesius, Christo-Neoplatonist, Friend of Hypatia (c. 360-420 A.D.).
26. To Amn-Ra (E.).
27. D. Mira Bai, Indian Princess, Mystic and Poetess (c. 1500 A.D.).
28. Geber, Alchemist (c. 730-800 A.D.).



## MARCH

1. D. David (C.), Patron Saint of Wales (6th cent. A.D.).  
D. Moses (c. 1570-1450 B.C.).
2. Thomas More Johnson, American Neoplatonist, d. 1919 (b. 30/3/1851 A.D.).
3. Nicholas Flamel, Hermetist, d. 1418 (b. 1330 A.D.).
4. D. Aneurin, Welsh Bard (6th cent. A.D.).
5. To the Great World Mother.  
D. Socrates, d. 399 (b. 469 B.C.).
7. D. Thomas Aquinas (C.), The Angelical Doctor, d. 1274 (b. 1225 A.D.).  
D. Empedocles, Pythagorean (c. 504-444 B.C.).
8. Tulsi Das (H.), Great Mystical Poet (c. 1530-1620 A.D.).
9. To the Mothers of the World Teachers.
10. D. Apollonius of Tyana, Neo-Pythagorean (c. 4-96 A.D.).  
Iolo Morganwg (Edward Williams), Preserver of Druidic Teachings, b. 1746 (d. 18/12/1826 A.D.).  
Mourning for the Slain Tammuz and Adonis.
11. D. Benjamin Whichcote, Cambridge Platonist, b. 1609 (d. 20/5/1683 A.D.).
12. D. Gregory the Great (C.), d. 604 (b. 540 A.D.).  
D. Hypatia, Martyr to the Ancient Wisdom, d. 415 A.D.
13. D. Diotima, Teacher of Socrates.
14. D. Firdūsī, Sūfī Mystic, d. 1020 (b. 935 A.D.).
15. D. Kōbō Daishi (B.), Founder of Shingon School of Buddhism (c. 774-835 A.D.).
17. D. Patrick (C.), Patron Saint of Ireland (c. 373-463 A.D.).  
D. Marcus Aurelius, Roman Emperor, d. 180 (b. 121 A.D.).
18. To Sanctus Gabriel, the Archangel (C.).
19. D. Mencius (Meng-Tsze), Disciple of Confucius (c. 373-288 B.C.).
20. Mystical Death or Aphanismos, of the Christos.  
Ovid (R.), Poet, b. 43 B.C. (d. 18 A.D.).
21. Sun enters Aries.  
To Eostre, Goddess of Spring and Dawn.  
Spring Festival—The Equinox.  
D. Benedict (C.), Patriarch of Western Monks and Founder of Order of Benedictines, b. c. 480 (d. 543 A.D.).
22. D. Avicbron, Arabian Neoplatonist (s.d. 1020-1070 A.D.).
23. D. Aquiba ben Joseph, Hebrew Martyr (c. 50-130 A.D.).
24. D. Lao Tsze, "The Old Philosopher" (c. 604-500 B.C.).
25. To Our Sovereign Lady, Isis.  
Lady Day. Annunciation B.V.M.  
Resurrection of Tammuz, Dionysus, Adonis, and Attis.
26. Walt Whitman, Poet and Mystic, d. 1892 (b. 31/5/1819 A.D.).
27. Meister Eckhart (C.), Mystic, d. 1329 (b. 1260 A.D.).
28. D. Teresa (C.), Mystic, b. 1515 (d. 12/10/1582 A.D.).  
D. Al Kindi, Arabian Neoplatonist (s.d. 9th cent. A.D.).
29. Mena, Legendary First King of Egypt (s.d. 4700 B.C.).
30. To Concordia, Salus et Pax (R.). (Concord, Health and Peace.)
31. D. David, Hebrew King and Psalmist (c. 1086 B.C.).



## PLOTINUS

### ON PROVIDENCE \*

(TRANSLATED BY THOMAS TAYLOR)

That to assign the essence and composition of the world to chance and fortune is irrational, and alone the province of men destitute of intellect and sense, is evident, even previous to the exercise of reason, although many sufficient arguments have been urged for its refutation. But it is necessary that, deducing from the beginning, we should consider the manner in which all things are and have been produced, especially since in some particulars, as if not rightly administered, a doubt arises concerning the Providence of the whole; the consequence of which is that some entirely deny Providence, while others affirm that the world was constituted by an evil artificer. But for the present we shall neglect the consideration of that providence, which, in producing particular effects, is a certain reason prior to the productions, describing the manner in which it is fit they should be constituted, or the impropriety of anything existing which it is not necessary should exist; and likewise pointing out the manner in which anything is present or not present with us. Considering, therefore, in the present case, the Providence of the universe, we shall unite with this every subsequent particular in amicable conjunction.

If, therefore, we suppose the world to be generated in a certain time, beyond which it had no existence, we must allow the same providence which we substitute in the production of particular effects, namely, a certain foresight and discursive consideration of Divinity deliberating in what condition the world should be especially formed, and by what means it may be constituted, as far as possible, the best. But since we believe that the world always had a beginning, we ought in consequence to assign a perpetual Providence to the world; on this account, that it is formed according to Intellect, an Intellect not preceding

\* For the Introduction see the previous number.

in time, but prior, because the world is its offspring, and because Intellect is the Cause, and, as it were, the principal Form and Exemplar of the world, and the world Its image, perpetually subsisting in the same manner, and flowing from thence as its source.

But the manner of its production is as follows: the nature of Intellect and of Being is the true and primary World, not distant from itself, neither debile by any divisible condition, nor indigent through any defect in its parts, since no part is there separate from the whole, but the whole of its life and the whole of its intellect, ever living in *one*, and at the same time ever intelligent, renders a part as the whole, and the whole amicable to itself; where one thing is not separated from another, nor any thing solitary or destitute of the rest; and on this account one thing is not detrimental or contrary to another.

But since Intellect is everywhere, it abides everywhere perfect, neither admitting mutation nor the operation of one thing in another; for on what account should It act in another when It is destitute of nothing? And why should Reason there produce reason, or Intellect another intellect; shall we say merely because it can of Itself produce something? But if this is the case, its being could not be altogether previously perfect, but it would so far endeavour to produce, and be moved, as it possessed something in itself of a subordinate and imperfect nature. But to beings perfectly blessed it is sufficient to abide in themselves and ever to remain in the same uniform mode of existence; but to be engaged in a multiplicity of affairs is not sufficiently safe, since it compels those who are employed in this manner to wander from themselves. But so far alone is the Exemplar of this world blessed, as by not operating He produces the greatest effects, and abiding in Himself, in Life ever vigilant and perfect, performs that which is neither insignificant nor small.

From this true Intelligible World, therefore, completely one, this Intellect Itself, our world depends, which is not truly one; it is diversified therefore and distributed into multitude, in which one thing becomes foreign and distant from another; so that friendship alone no longer flourishes here, but discord arises by distance from its source; and through its defect some things are



necessarily in a state of opposition to others: for here no part is sufficient to itself, but while it externally seeks after safety, it brings war upon that by which it is preserved. But this world was produced, not from any certain reasoning power concluding that it should be made, but from a necessity that a secondary nature should inseparably attend that which is primary and the exemplar; for this Intelligible World is not of that kind that it could possibly be the last of things: it is indeed the first of beings, possessing an abundant power, a power universal, capable of producing everything, without the necessity of inquiring in order to fabricate; since, if we suppose it to operate by inquiry its energy could not be spontaneous and truly its own; but its essence would be similar to that of an artificer who does not derive from himself that which he produces but provides it as something adventitious by learning and inquiry.

Intellect, therefore, diffusing something of Itself into matter, residing in Itself ever quiet and immovable, fabricates all things; but that which flows from Intellect is Reason, which will always continue to flow while Intellect Itself remains in the order of things.

And as in the reason which is inserted into *seed*, all things exist together in the same, and one thing neither opposes, disagrees with, nor hinders another, while, in the meantime, from the evolution of the seed something is produced in the subject mass in which one part is distant from another and mutual opposition and discord arise; so from one Intellect, and Reason flowing from It, this universe distant from Itself arose.

Hence, by a necessity of nature, some things are born amicable and salutary to each other, while others are pernicious and unfriendly; and partly with consent, and partly averse, they alternately destroy and are destroyed, so as by their decay to produce mutual generation without end. At the same time Reason, the mighty builder, forms one harmony from these active and passive natures, and while every one produces a sound peculiar to itself, binds the universe in perfect union and consent. For this universe is not self-sufficient, like Intellect and Reason in the Intelligible World, but participates of these; hence it requires the bond of sympathy and consent, from the concurrence of Necessity and Intellect: Necessity drawing it down to an inferior nature, and causing it to decline into the privation,



and, as it were, shade of reason; since it is itself destitute of reason; in the meantime Intellect ruling over Necessity.

For the Intelligible World is Reason alone, nor is it possible that any other production can be equally perfect and divine; so that whatever is produced posterior to Intellect necessarily passes into something inferior and is no longer Reason, nor yet a certain matter alone, because it is endued with order and is, therefore, of a mixed and composite nature.

What the world ends in, therefore, is matter and reason; but that from which it arose, and by which it is governed is Soul, urging that which is mixed, and which, without labour and fatigue, by its presence alone easily rules the whole. Nor can any one with propriety detract from the beauty of this corporeal world, or accuse it, as if it were not the best of all things constituted with body; nor again blame the cause from which the world arose. In the first place, because the world was formed by the same kind of necessity as the shadow of any substance obstructing the light, and was not constructed by the counsel of reason, but from a more excellent essence naturally generating an offspring similar to itself. And neither in the next place, supposing the world caused by discursive consideration, is it a disgrace to its Author; for He formed it a certain whole, entirely beautiful, sufficient, and friendly to itself, equally according and correspondent, as well in its lesser as in its greater parts. He, therefore, who by a survey of the parts blames the whole, blames foolishly and without a cause; since it is necessary, as well by comparing the parts with the whole, to consider whether they accord and are accommodated to the whole, as in surveying the whole to neglect a minute examination of its smallest parts; otherwise we can no longer be said to blame the universe, but only some of its parts considered as detached from the whole: just as if a man should solely confine himself to a survey of the hair, or some particular limb, neglecting in the meantime to contemplate the divine spectacle of the whole man; or, by Jove, as if someone omitting every other animated being, should bring the most abject as an instance of want of beauty in the whole and, neglecting all other human kind, should adduce for the purpose *Thersites* alone.

But since the generated world is a collective whole, if we apply the ears of our intellect to the world we shall, perhaps, hear it



thus addressing us: "There is no doubt but I was produced by Divinity, from whence I am formed perfect, composed from all animals, entirely sufficient to myself, and destitute of nothing; because all things are contained in my ample bosom, the nature of all generated beings, gods, the illustrious race of daemons, the noble army of virtuous souls, and men rendered happy by wisdom and virtue. Nor is earth alone adorned with an endless variety of plants and animals; nor does the power of the universal Soul alone diffuse itself to the sea and become bounded by its circumfluent waters, while the wide expanse of air and aether is destitute of life and soul; but the celestial spaces are filled with illustrious souls, supplying life to the stars, and directing their revolutions in everlasting order. Add, too, that the celestial orbs, in imitation of Intellect which seeks after nothing external, are wisely agitated in a perpetual circuit round the central sun. Besides, whatever I contain desires good, all things collectively considered, and particulars according to their peculiar ability; for that general Soul by which I am enlivened, and the heavens, the most illustrious parts, continually depend on *good* for support; together with the gods which reign over my parts, every animal and plant, and whatever I contain which appear destitute of life: while some things are seen participating of being alone, others of life, and others besides this are endued with sentient powers; some possess the still higher faculty of reason, and lastly, others are total life and intelligence; for it is not proper to require everywhere equal things among such as are unequal, nor to expect that the finger should see, but to assign this to the province of the eye, while another purpose is required in the finger, which can, I think, be no other than that it remains as a finger and performs its peculiar office."

No one, then, ought to wonder that fire is extinguished by water while it often consumes other things, since something different from water was the cause of its existence; nor is it improper that fire should be destroyed by something not produced from itself; besides its very existence proceeds from the corruption of another, and it brings no impropriety or disorder from its corruption, and in the place of fire which is extinct, another fire flourishes and abides in the incorporeal heavens, where everything abides in immaterial and immutable



perfections. But in this Intelligible Heaven the universe ever lives, together with its most honourable and principal parts. But souls alternately changing their bodies pass into other forms and as often as a soul is able to rise beyond the bonds of generation it lives with universal Soul. But bodies are changed according to form, and particulars according to the whole, since animals are produced and nourished by their interposition; for life is here moveable, but there immoveable.

For it is indeed requisite that motion should arise from an immoveable nature, and that from life, ever vigilant and flourishing in itself, another life should emanate, as it were, a vital and unstable blast, and nothing more than the breathing of a quiet and permanent life.

Besides, the mutual opposition and destruction of animals among themselves happens from a necessity of nature, since they were not born with an eternal permanency of being, but are produced because reason occupies the whole of matter, possessing all things in itself which abide in the supernal heaven; or from whence could they arise unless they existed there?

Hence we may affirm that the mutual injuries of men among themselves proceed from the general appetite of good, when incapable of obtaining good they deviate from the right way and offensively invade whatever they meet, like men wandering in the dark who are liable every moment to molest and be molested by each other. But those who act unjustly suffer punishment through the perversion of their soul from actions that are evil, as well as because in conformity to a certain order they pass into an inferior place; for nothing can ever fly from the order of universal law.

But order is not, as some think, instituted on account of the prevarication of order, or law on account of the transgression of law, as if these were produced through more debased natures, but rather because order is here adventitious; so that because order is, a transgression of order takes place, and because perfect law and perfect reason exist, a transgression of law and reason ensues; but yet not in such a manner as that things better become worse, but because beings indigent, and which ought to receive a better nature, often, either spontaneously, or from fortune, or external impediment, cannot receive the good which they require: for whatever uses adventitious order cannot,



perhaps follow that order, either from the impediment of interior vice, or from some foreign circumstance of being.

Many things besides suffer from others, which are unwilling at the same time to molest them, and pursue a different course; and animals, which possess of themselves a spontaneous motion, as well tend to things better as decline to inferior natures. But it is not perhaps necessary to inquire now into the inclination or lapse itself to a worse condition; for the force of deviation, though small at the beginning, by continued progression in the same way, becomes more and more assiduously confused and erroneous. Indeed, wherever body is present, desire, by a necessity of nature attends; besides, whatever primarily and suddenly occurs, and is not immediately perceived and apprehended, produces at length an election to that nature to which some individual was first inclined. But punishments follow under the administration of Divine justice; nor is it unjust that the base soul should suffer consonant to its affection; nor is it requisite that those should be happy who perform nothing worthy of felicity; but the good alone are happy, because it is on this very account that the Gods are blessed.

If, then, souls in this world are capable of felicity, it is not lawful to complain that in this region of sense some are unhappy, but we ought rather to accuse their imbecility, because they are not able strenuously to contend where the honours of virtue are proposed as the reward. For who can justly complain that those who are not yet consciously united to the Divine do not possess a Divine life? Hence it is that poverty and disease are things of no moment to the good, and are useful to the evil; besides, it is unavoidable sometimes to be sick, since we are invested with body.

Nor are things of this kind entirely useless to the common order and plenitude of the universe; for as Reason, the great Artificer of the world, makes the corruption of some things subservient to the generation of others (since nothing can escape its universal comprehension), so a depraved body and a soul, languid by corporeal passions, are shortly comprehended under another series and order, some of which confer to the good of the patient, as poverty and disease; but depravity brings something useful to the universe, by becoming an example of its justice, and the source of abundant utility, for it



renders souls vigilant, and causes them to inquire diligently what path they must pursue most powerfully to avoid the precipice of evil. It is likewise subservient to our becoming acquainted with the superlative worth of virtue, by a comparison of those evils which afflict the vicious soul. Not that evils originate on this account, but, as it was previously observed, Reason, the Artificer of the world, applied them to the best advantage; but to be able to make evil things subservient to good purposes is a proof of the greatest possible ability. Reason is likewise able to use things which are produced formless in the generation of other forms; and we ought to reckon evil the total deficiency of good.

But it is necessary that a deficiency of good should take place in this region of sense, because the good which it participates subsists in something different from itself, and that something which is different brings a defect of good, since that in which it resides is not good.

On this account, as Plato says, it is impossible that evils can be entirely extirpated, because some things possess an inferior capacity of receiving good to others; and others again are different from good, deriving the cause of their subsistence from thence, and becoming such on account of their extreme distance from the good. But to those circumstances which appear frequently to happen contrary to order and right, as when evil is the portion of the good, or good the lot of the evil, we may properly reply that nothing evil can happen to the good, nor anything good to the evil. For if it should be said that many things contrary to nature happen to the good man and many things consonant to nature to the wicked, how in this case can a right distribution of things subsist? We answer that if what is according to nature neither adds anything of felicity to the good nor takes away anything of depravity from the evil, and what is against nature takes away nothing from the good, of what consequence is it whether the one subsists in preference to the other? For though an evil man should be beautiful in his body, but a good man deformed, yet, as far as possible, beautiful and fit in all his actions, we ought not to blame the order of things, but esteem such a dispensation as the work of the most beneficent Providence. But if it be said that it is by no means proper that the evil should be the lords and rulers of cities, but the



good in a state of servitude; for though circumstances of this kind add nothing to the evil or the good, yet an evil ruler must commit the greatest wickedness and injustice; and that, besides this, the evil conquer in battle and commit the most base and barbarous actions on their unhappy captives; for all these circumstances compel us to doubt how they can subsist under the dominion of an all-wise Providence; since though he who operates ought in the execution of his work to look to the whole, yet it is necessary that the parts also should pursue that which is most expedient to their natures, especially where they are animated and endued with rational powers. Lastly it is certain that Providence extends Itself through all things, and that Its peculiar employment is to leave nothing forsaken and neglected; in consequence of which, if we allow that the whole world depends on Intellect, and that Its power is diffused through the universe, we should endeavour to demonstrate after what manner particulars are rightly administered.

In the first place then, we ought not to be ignorant that when we inquire after beauty in things which are mixed, we should not minutely seek after the beauty of the parts from which they are composed, nor expect to find primary natures in such as are subsequent and secondary. But since the world is endowed with a body we must allow something accidental to the world from the nature of body; we must likewise respect its participation of Reason, as far as its mixed condition can admit, and reckon it constituted sufficiently good if nothing is wanting which it is able to receive. Just as though anyone should contemplate the most beautiful man upon earth, yet it is not proper he should think that he is the same with Man in the Intelligible World, but he should esteem the work of the Artificer sufficiently complete if this man, though invested with flesh, nerves, and bones, is yet comprehended by reason, and so far rendered beautiful as reason, diffusing itself over matter, is able to effect. This being granted, let us now reply to the preceding inquiries; for, perhaps, by a solution of these doubts, we shall be able to discover the admirable gift of Providence, and the wonderful Power which is the Artificer of this world.

*(To be continued)*

## EXTRACTS FROM THE MAHABHARATA

That gain which brings loss is not to be highly esteemed; but the loss which brings gain is to be highly valued.

Wealth brings loss to some men; and the man attached to the things derived from wealth does not find good.

Hurtful things take the appearance of advantages, and advantages of things hurtful; for in the case of some men the loss of wealth is a benefit.

Considering loss as gain, and gain as loss, a foolish man, whose senses are not subdued, regards as happiness what is his great misery.

Dost thou not perceive that thou art through delusion enveloping thyself in many threads coming out of thyself, wrapping thyself round like a silkworm? Farewell to all attachments, for attachment is faulty; the silkworm is bound by what it weaves around itself.

Men who possess knowledge do not die when they are separated from their bodies; nor do they perish when they have carefully kept to the proper path. For he who increases his righteousness is an instructed man; whilst he who falls away from righteousness is deluded.

Men, after attaining to one condition of wealth after another, remain unsatisfied and deluded; but the wise attain contentment.

Happiness is enjoyed by him who abandons that lifelong disease, desire, which the wicked cannot abandon, and which does not decay as the body decays.



## THE ELEMENTS OF THEOLOGY

PROCLUS ★

## PROPOSITION CXV

*Every God is superessential, supervital, and superintellectual*

For if each is a self-perfect unity, but neither being, life, nor intellect is a unity, but that which is united, it is evident that every God is beyond each of these. For if They differ from each other, but all are in all, each of these, being all, will not be one only. Further, if the First God is superessential, and every God is of the series of the First, as a God each will be superessential. But that the First God is superessential is evident; for essence is not the same with unity, nor is to exist the same thing as to be united. If, however, these are not the same, either the First God is both these, and in this case He will not be one only, but something else besides The One, and will participate of unity, but will not be The One Itself; or He is one of these. But if indeed He is essence, He will be indigent of The One. It is, however, impossible that The Good, and the First should be indigent. Hence He is One alone; and therefore superessential. But if each thing imparts the peculiarity of that which it is primarily to the whole series of which it is the leader, then every Divine number is superessential, since every principal cause produces similars prior to dissimilars. If, therefore, the First God is superessential, all the Gods will be superessential: for They will be similar to the First. Since, however, They are also essences, They will be produced from the first essence, as the monad of essences.

## PROPOSITION CXVI

*Every Deity except The One is participable*

For that The One is imparticipable is evident, since if It were participated, and on this account pertained to something else,

\* For previous sections see SHRINE OF WISDOM, Nos. 65 to 81.



It would no longer be similarly the cause of all things; both of such as are prior to beings, and of beings themselves. But that the other unities are participated we shall thus demonstrate. If there is another imparticipable unity after the First, in what does it differ from The One? Either it subsists after the same manner as That; and, in this case, how is it the second, but the other first? Or it does not subsist after the same manner. And thus one of these will be The One Itself, but the other one and not one. This not-one also, if it is no hypostasis whatever, will be one alone. But if it is a certain hypostasis other than The One, in this case The One will be participated by the not-one; and that will be a self-perfect one which conjoins the not-one with The One: so that again God will be The One, since He is God, but that which is not-one will subsist in the participation of The One. Every unity, therefore, which subsists after The One is participable, and every God is participable.

## PROPOSITION CXVII

*Every God is the measure of beings*

For if every God is unical He defines and measures all the multitude of beings: for all multitudes being in their own nature indefinite, are bounded through The One. But that which is one being, or being characterized by The One, measuring and terminating the natures with which It is present, leads into bound that which according to its own power is not bounded. For the one being has the form of The One by participation.

But that which is uniform, or has the form of The One, recedes from indefiniteness and infinity: and the more uniform it is, the less is it indefinite and without measure. Every multitude of beings, therefore, is measured by the Divine unities.

*(To be continued)*